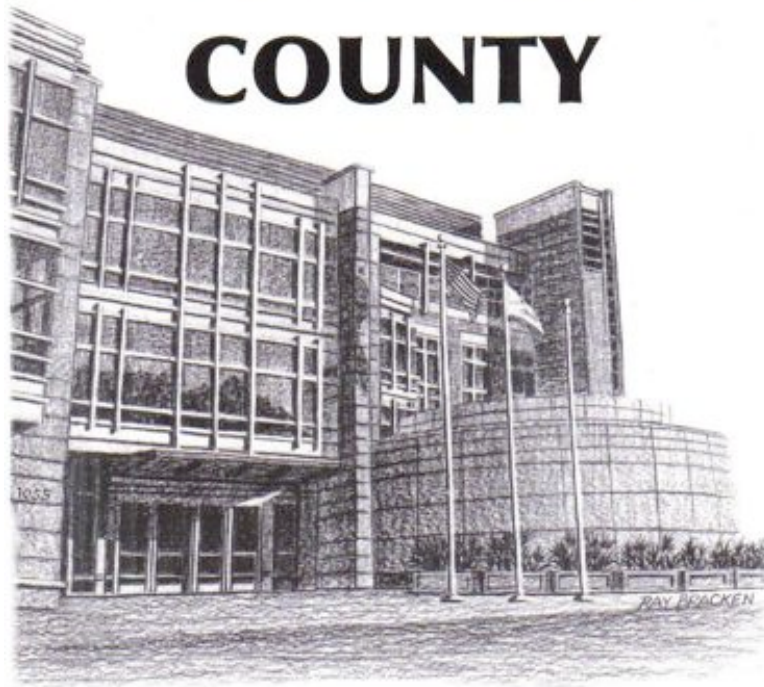


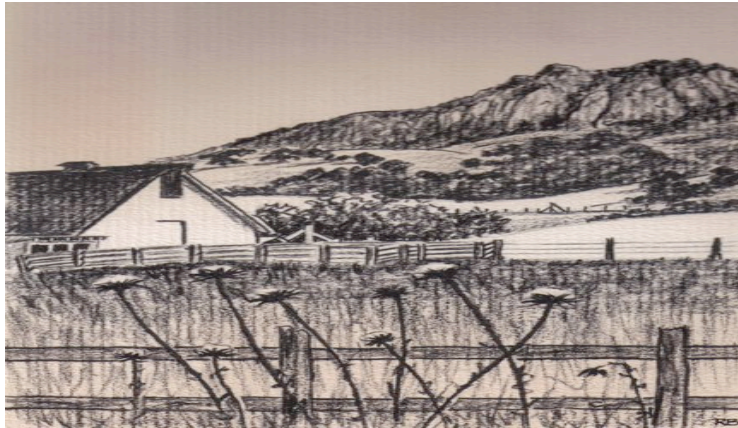
KNOW YOUR COUNTY



San Luis Obispo County Government Center

A Guide to Government San Luis Obispo County

Compiled and published by the League of Women Voters
of San Luis Obispo County, California



The League of Women Voters is a nonpartisan organization whose purpose is to promote political responsibility through active and informed participation of citizens in government. Membership is open to all citizens of voting age. Those under 18 and non-citizens are offered associate membership; they cannot vote on League matters.

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A Spanish language edition of Know Your County is available from:

Si puede pedir una ediccion de Conozca Su Condado en espanol de:

League of Women Voters
P.O. Box 4210
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For information or additional copies of this booklet, please call the League at (805)782-4040

This booklet is on-line at www.slo.ca.lwvnet.org/KYC.html
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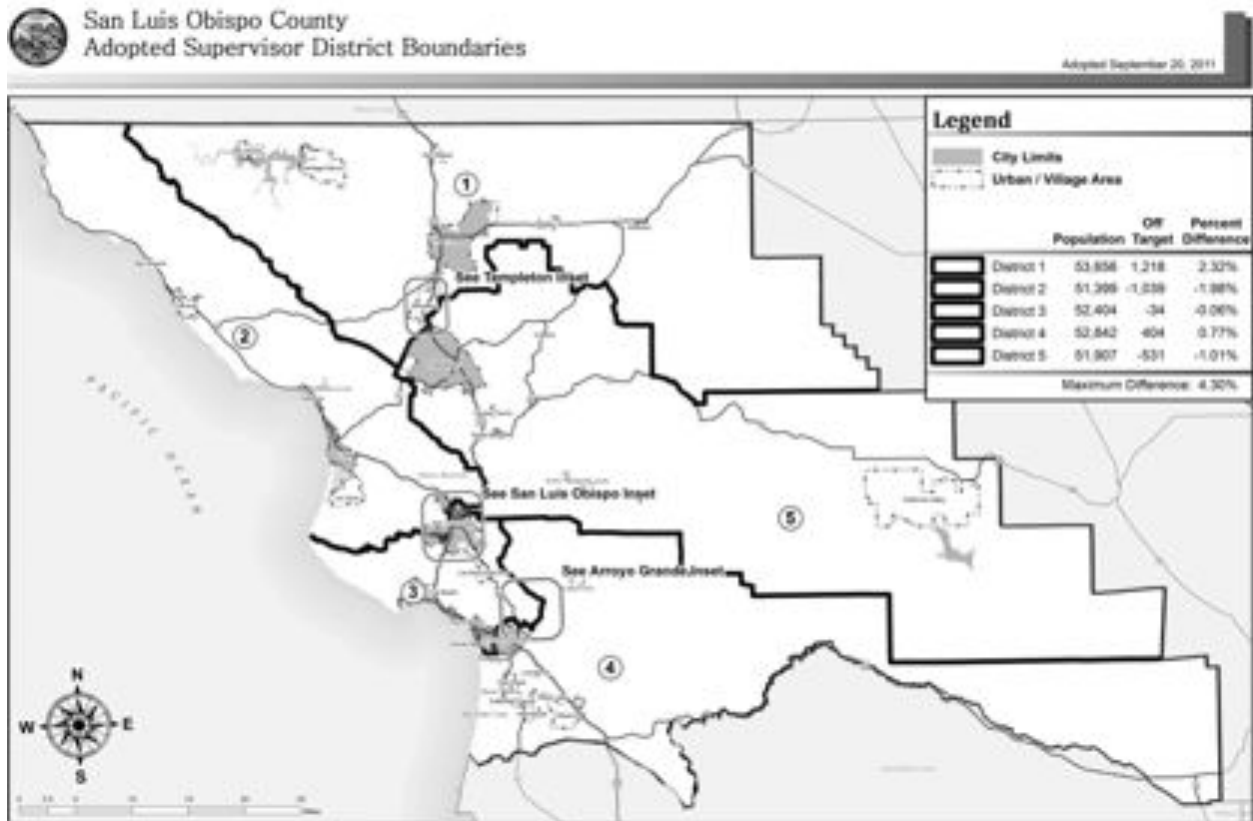
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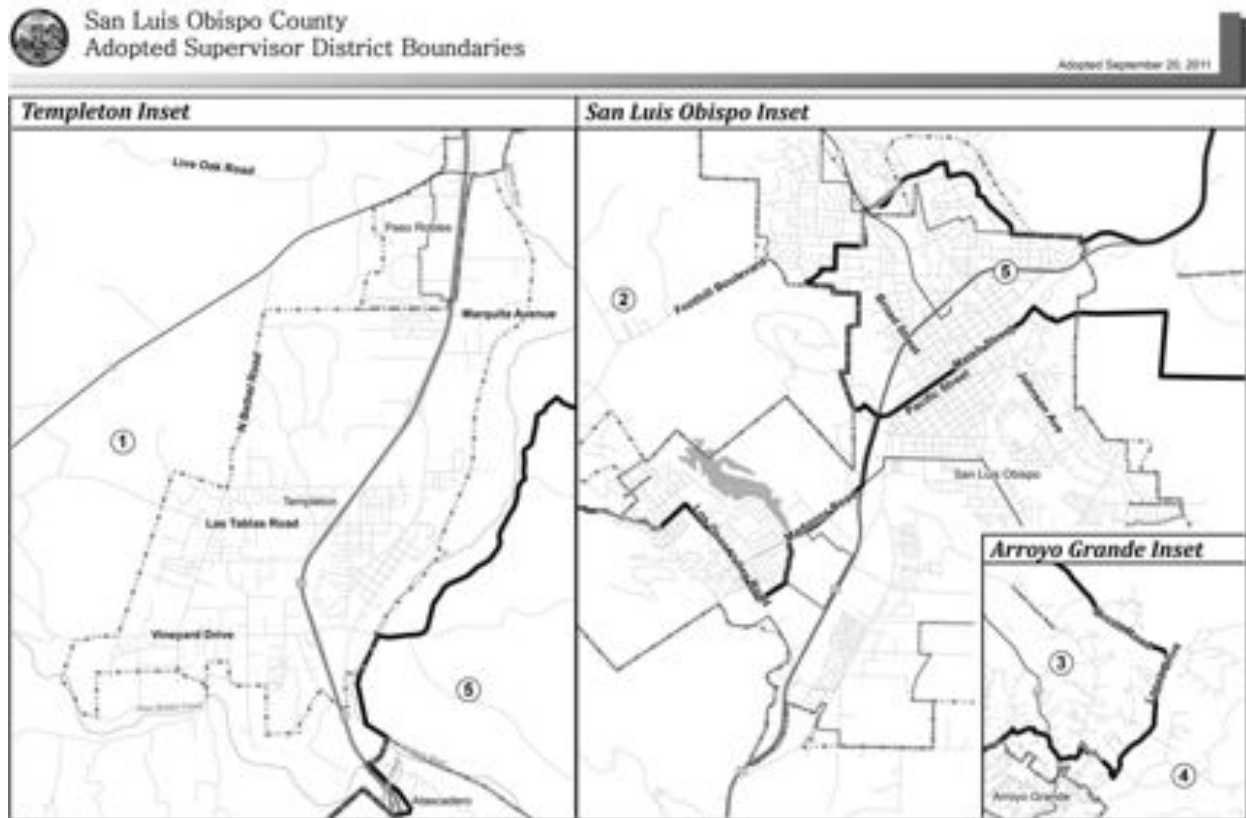
Dear Reader,

The League of Women Voters of San Luis Obispo County has compiled this booklet to help you become a more informed citizen and to encourage your participation in the government of our County. Know Your County gives you a brief look at our County's location, history, and people, but most of all, its government. We hope you will want to learn more.

District Map



District Map (details)



The County Defined

The Place

San Luis Obispo County, one of California's fifty-eight counties, is located on the Pacific coast, midway between Los Angeles and San Francisco. It covers 3,316 square miles and includes 100 miles of coastline. The center of County government is located in the city of San Luis Obispo. With a population of 273,231, the County ranks 23rd in population among California's 58 counties. It is divided into five supervisory districts. San Luis Obispo, with a population of 44,705, is the largest city in the County.

A chain of 22-million-year-old volcanic peaks enhances the natural beauty of San Luis Obispo County. Known locally as the Seven Sisters (there are actually nine peaks), they extend from the city of San Luis Obispo west to Morro Rock and beyond to the Davidson Seamount below the surface of the ocean. In addition to many creeks, there are two rivers of some size: the Santa Maria River, which serves as the southern boundary of the County, and the Salinas River in the inland portion of the County, which flows north into Monterey County. The Salinas is a large submerged stream most of the year, but in the winter months it can have a 200-foot-wide flow of water.

Primarily rural in appearance, San Luis Obispo County incorporates state institutions, tourism, agriculture, small retail businesses, wine industry, light manufacturing, and construction. It has cultural organizations, historical interest, great natural beauty, and ecological significance - all attractions for a large and growing number of tourists.

California Polytechnic State University and Cuesta Community College together provide higher education for more than 31,000 students. Cultural venues in the County include the Performing Arts Center (PAC) at Cal Poly, the Clark Center in Arroyo Grande, the San Luis Obispo Little Theater, American Melodrama in Oceano, and Cambria's Pewter Plough Playhouse. Thriving are the San Luis Obispo County Symphony and the Festival Mozaic, as well as the Civic Ballet, the Vocal Arts Ensemble, and the Cuesta Chorale. Numerous museums and art galleries attract tourists.

State and county institutions are the major employers: County Government, California Polytechnic State University, California Men's Colony, Atascadero State Hospital, and the school districts. The top ten private employers and the approximate number of persons they employ locally are: Pacific Gas & Electric (1,750), Compass Health Inc. (1,200), Tenet Healthcare Corporation (1,170), King Ventures (899), Catholic Healthcare West (853), Vons (674), Albertsons (658), Wal-Mart (554), Rabobank (459), and Home Depot (370).

The mild climate and fertile soils of the County produce varietal grapes, broccoli, other fruits and vegetables, nuts, and grains. Ranches in the rolling hills support a large animal industry, while the harbors at Morro Bay and Avila accommodate both commercial and sport fishing. The State Park and National Estuary at Morro Bay are important for their recreational, aesthetic, and ecological value.

The People

During the 1849 Gold Rush, fortune hunters traveled through the County on their way north to the gold fields. Some returned to this area, followed later by settlers who came primarily from the northeastern states. Southerners arrived after the Civil War. World War II brought army camps, and many service personnel returned to settle here after the war.

According to the 2009 Census report, the County's population is 85.5% White not of Hispanic/Latino origin; 18.8% Latino; 3.1% Asian; 1.9% African-American; 0.1% Pacific Islander; 0.9% American Indian/Alaskan Native; and 3.4% mixed race. The median age is 37.6 years and the median household income is \$57,722. Over the past 30 years, the population of the County has more than doubled.

Travel Connections

Railroad: In 1861 a tri-weekly stage carrying passengers and mail between San Francisco and Los Angeles via San Luis Obispo replaced years of mail-couriers on horseback. By 1873 the Southern Pacific Railroad had extended rail lines from San Francisco to Salinas; stages drawn by horses completed the journey to San Luis Obispo. It was not until October of 1886 that the railroad reached San Miguel, at which time the community became a shipping point. In November of that same year the railroad reached Paso Robles, famed for its hot springs and mud baths, and suddenly it became a real estate boom town. In April of 1887 the railroad reached Templeton. A depot was built and a new farming community began to grow. Not until five years later did the railroad reach San Luis Obispo. Construction required seven tunnels to be built along with many fills, a horseshoe curve, and a long steel trestle. Completion of the line in May 1894 was cause for a grand celebration. The rail line to the shoreline and on to Guadalupe in Santa Barbara County was not completed until 1901. This finally closed the gap between San Francisco and Los Angeles, and San Luis Obispo was finally on the map.

Highways: In 1911 the California Highway Commission was organized with San Luis Obispo as its headquarters. By 1912 the office began functioning and developing Coast Highway 1 from San Luis Obispo to the coast and between San Simeon and Carmel. It also began developing Highway 101 north through Cuesta Pass and south through the Gaviota Gorge.

Airports: Local airport service began in 1950 and gradually developed from serving only prop planes to serving small jets as well as private planes. San Luis Obispo County Regional Airport (McChesney Field) makes air travel possible to major airports in California as well as other western states. Small airports in Paso Robles and Oceano also offer service to private planes.

History

Human history in the County dates back at least 9,000 years, with the Salinan Indians inhabiting the area north of the Cuesta Grade and the Chumash Indians living south of the Cuesta Grade and on the coast.

In 1542 Juan Rodriguez Portola, a Portuguese navigator, sailed up the California coast under the Spanish flag. He noticed "mountains which seem to reach to the heavens" – later called the Santa Lucia, the coastal mountain range along part of the coastline of Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. In 1769 Gaspar de Portola led a Spanish army of occupation north from San Diego to Monterey following a coastal route. Coming to what is now Pismo Beach they camped in Price Canyon and later reached a valley with "troops of bears" and named it Los Osos (the bears).

Continuing on, they sighted “a great rock in the form of a round morro” - the Spanish term for a crown-shaped rock or hill - what we now know as “Morro Rock”. Moving northward, the army passed through Cayucos, stopping east of Point Estero, and later camping at Santa Rosa Creek north of Cambria. Continuing along Pico Creek near San Simeon Bay, they camped near Ragged Point. With further routes along the coast impassable, the army turned inland and followed a valley northward to Monterey County where the Presidio of Monterey was established. In 1772 near famine at the Presidio caused by the failure of supply ships to reach it brought an expedition to the “Valley of the Bears” or Los Osos. Twenty-five loads of salted Grizzly Bear meat were carried north to the Presidio to stave off hunger.

As the Spanish colonized California, they established missions along a route now known as El Camino Real or “The King’s Highway”. Mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa was established in 1772, as were ranchos to support it.

In 1821 Mexico revolted against Spain. California land was then owned by the Mexican nation. Vast acreage that had been under mission control was sold to private owners. William G. Dana, a Boston sea captain, purchased the 38,000-acre Rancho Nipomo. Don Joaquin Estrade became owner of Rancho Santa Margarita. In 1848, at the end of the Mexican War with the United States, California became a territory of the United States under the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

Development of County Government

Voters approved California's first state constitution on November 13, 1849. One of the first acts of the new state legislature in 1850 was to divide the state into twenty-seven counties, one of which was San Luis Obispo. At the time, the County had a population of fewer than 1,500 people, including about 1,000 Native Americans. Almost all of them lived on the great ranchos that covered half a million acres. The population was mainly Spanish speaking, thus early records are in Spanish.

The first election of County officials took place in April 1850. The first courthouse was a room in the Mission San Luis Obispo.

Although the original state constitution approved in 1849 divided the state into twenty-seven counties, the present-day state constitution, adopted thirty years later, allowed for fifty-two counties.

A uniform structure of county governments was developed at this time, with all counties governed by general law. When the constitution was amended in 1911, it became possible to have a charter form of government (for greater flexibility of function). However, San Luis Obispo County chose to remain a general law county.

The State Constitution requires that every county elect a governing body (a board of supervisors) and general law counties must elect their supervisors by district. State statutes regulate the structure of general law counties. These statutes not only specify the principal county officers, they also assign their duties. Election by the people is required. Elective offices can be consolidated into combinations, which are defined by law. However, supervisors are prohibited from giving to appointed officials any responsibilities that have already been assigned by law to elected officials.

County Government

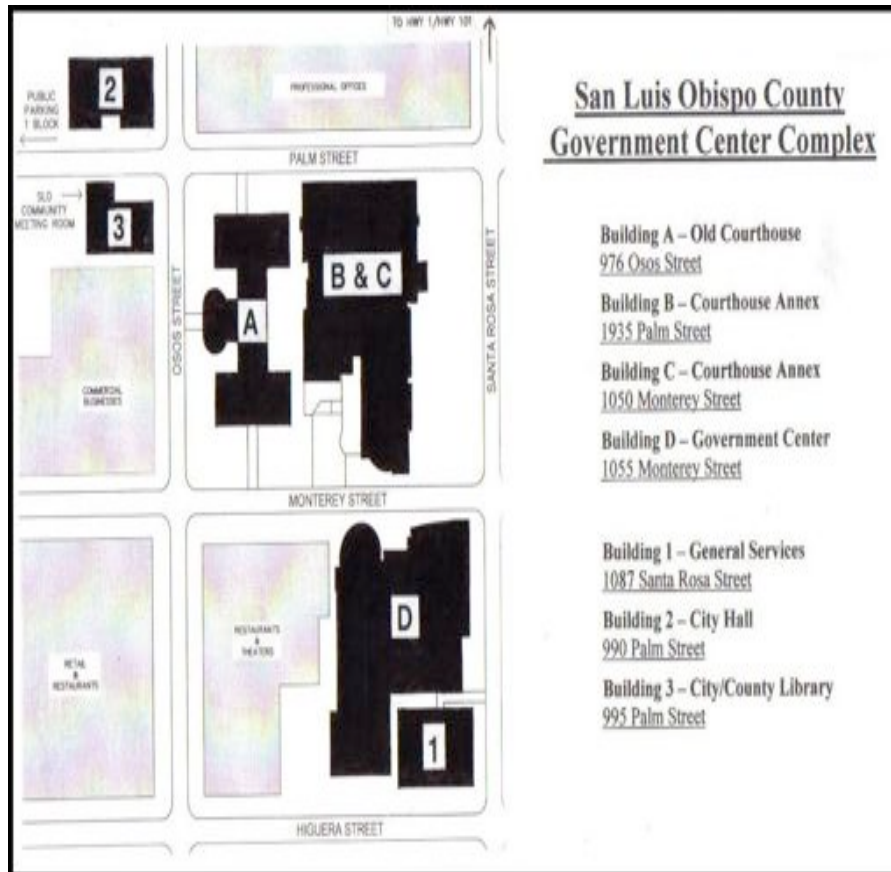
HOW COUNTY GOVERNMENT WORKS

San Luis Obispo County government provides a wide variety of services. These include law enforcement, health services, public welfare assistance, road construction and maintenance, land use planning, and air pollution control. Fire protection is provided throughout the unincorporated areas by contract with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. Sewer systems, water systems, flood control, and street and road lighting are some of the services administered by the County through its special districts. The County Superintendent of Schools oversees public education. Judicial matters are handled through the Superior Court system. The County administers state-mandated programs and distributes state program monies to the eleven local school districts, the seven incorporated city governments, and to other agencies which provide state-mandated services.

County programs and services are administered by elected and appointed officials, boards, and commissions, and are carried out by their staffs. In 2010, the County employed 2,403.50 people in 22 Departments. The five supervisory districts of San Luis Obispo County encompass the following cities (in bold type) and communities:

- | | |
|------------|---|
| District 1 | Adelaida, Cholame, Lake Nacimiento, Oak Shores, Paso Robles , San Miguel, Shandon, Templeton, Whitley Gardens |
| District 2 | Baywood Park, California Men's Colony, Cal Poly (portion), Cambria, Cayucos, Cuesta-by-the-Sea, Harmony, Los Osos, Morro Bay , San Luis Obispo (portion), San Simeon |
| District 3 | Arroyo Grande (portion), Avila Beach, Country Club, Edna-Los Ranchos, Grover Beach , Pismo Beach , Rolling Hills Estate, San Luis Obispo (portion), Shell Beach, Squire Canyon, Sunset Palisades |
| District 4 | Arroyo Grande (portion) , Black Lake Canyon, Callendar-Garrett, Edna Valley, Halcyon, Huasna-Lopez, Nipomo, Nipomo-Mesa, Oceano, Palo Mesa |
| District 5 | Atascadero , Cal Poly (portion), California Valley, Creston, Cuyama, Garden Farms, Pozo, San Luis Obispo (portion), Santa Margarita |

San Luis Obispo County Government Center Complex



ELECTED OFFICIALS

County officials are elected on a nonpartisan basis in the direct primary election held in June of each even-numbered year. If no candidate receives more than fifty percent of all votes cast for an office, the two candidates receiving the highest number of votes compete in a run-off at the November general election that same year. County officials are elected for four-year terms and judges for six-year terms. Elected officials' salaries are set by County ordinance with exceptions noted. Officials must be registered voters and residents of the County.

Most County offices are housed in the **County Government Center Complex** on Monterey, Osos, Palm, and Santa Rosa Streets, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408. See map on page 9.

County Board of Supervisors

Phone: 781-5450 Fax: 781-1350

Room D-430; Chambers – Room D-170, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

www.co.slo.ca.us

Members: Five, elected from districts with equal populations.

Term: Four years, terms staggered.

Duties: As the County governing body, enacts all County laws; adopts budgets; appoints certain officials; appropriates funds; approves formal contracts; appoints members of boards and commissions; sets policies for government and various special districts; rules on County General Plan and land use issues. Chairman is elected annually by the Board, on a rotating basis.

Meetings: First four Tuesdays of each month in the Board of Supervisors' Chambers, County Government Center, 1055 Monterey St., San Luis Obispo, with the exception of Winter/Summer breaks and the annual CSAC (California State Association of Counties) conference. Sessions are broadcast live on FM radio KCBX (90.1) and cable television (channel 21). TV coverage is replayed periodically throughout the week. Members of the public may address the Board during the public comment period or on agenda items as they come up for discussion. Agendas are available at the meetings and on the Board of Supervisors and Clerk Recorder websites.

Auditor – Controller

Phone: 781-5040 Fax: 546-1220

Room D-220, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

www.co.slo.ca.us

Term: Four years.

Duties: Accounts for all financial transactions; authorizes expenditures by warrants; exercises control over County treasury; audits County departments and special districts. Distributes property taxes to cities, schools, and special districts.

Assessor

Phone: 781-5643 Fax: 781-5641
Room D-360, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
www.co.slo.ca.us

Term: Four years.

Duties: Implements State Revenue and Taxation Code. Assesses all taxable property except utilities, which are assessed by State Board of Equalization; prepares annual assessment rolls; keeps assessment records; administers property tax exemptions. Appeals of assessed valuation are heard by the Assessment Appeals Board.

Treasurer - Tax Collector - Public Administrator

Room D-290, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
www.co.slo.ca.us

Term: Four years.

Duties: **Treasurer:** Phone: 781-5842 Fax: 781-1079
Provides banking and investment services. These services include receiving, verifying, investing, and safekeeping all moneys belonging to the County, school districts, and special districts for which the County Treasurer is ex-officio district treasurer. Assists with school, special district, and County issuance of debt.

Tax Collector: Phone: 781-5831 Fax: 781-5362
Deposits and accounts for all secured, unsecured, and supplemental property taxes levied by County agencies. Collects business license regulatory fees and transient occupancy tax (bed tax).

Public Administrator: Phone: 781-5843 Fax: 781-5362
By appointment of Superior Court, handles a decedent's estate in the event that no one is able or willing to do so.

County Clerk - Recorder

Phone: 781-5080 Fax: 781-1111
Room D-120, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
North County: 5955 Capistrano Ave., Suite B, Atascadero, CA 93422
North County: Phone: 461-6041 Fax: 461-6043
www.co.slo.ca.us

Term: Four years.

Duties: **Clerk of the Board of Supervisors:** attends all meetings of the Board of Supervisors and Assessment Appeals Boards; prepares and files minutes, final resolutions, and ordinances resulting from those meetings.

County Clerk: issues marriage licenses, files fictitious business name statements, and notary bonds, and processes passport applications. Serves as **Commissioner of Civil Marriages**.

Recorder: records and maintains documents affecting real property and vital

documents such as birth, death, and marriage certificates.

Registrar of Voters: files and maintains voter registrations, files campaign statements and conflict of interest forms. Conducts County, State, and Federal elections, including elections for special districts and school districts.

District Attorney/Victim Witness

Phone: 781-5800

4th Floor, 1035 Palm Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Term: Four years.

Qualifications: Required to have been admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of California.
Required to submit a Statement of Economic Interest at time of filing.

Duties: Serves as public prosecutor; presents evidence to the Grand Jury; assists in Juvenile Court; investigates consumer fraud; aids victims of crimes.

Sheriff - Coroner

Phone: 781-4550

1545 Kansas Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Term: Four years.

Duties: **Sheriff:** serves as law enforcement officer and keeper of the peace in all unincorporated areas in the County.

Coroner: directs medical personnel to establish medical facts pertaining to each case to determine circumstances, manner, and cause of violent, sudden, or unusual deaths.

Superior Court Judges

Phone: 781-5143

1035 Palm Street –Room 385, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

www.slocourts.net

Number: 9 judges.

Term: Six years.

Qualifications: Must have been a practicing attorney for ten years.

Duties: Hears all felonies; handles wills, estates, domestic relations, psychiatric hearings, rights of children and adults, and civil cases. One judge presides over Juvenile Court, which hears cases involving offenders under eighteen. Salary set by the State.

County Board of Education Trustees

Phone: 543-7732, ext. 201

Members: Five, one elected from each trustee area.
Term: Four years.
Duties: Approves the County Office of Education budget. Establishes policies for providing special education classes, Juvenile Court and Community Schools, environmental education programs, and a wide variety of specialized services for school districts conducted by County Office of Education staff. Hears expulsion and inter-district transfer appeals.

County Superintendent of Schools

Phone: 543-7732 Fax: 541-1105
3350 Education Drive at Highway 1, San Luis Obispo, CA 93405
www.slocoe.org

Term: Four years.
Duties: Serves as secretary and executive officer of County Board of Education; maintains State standards in local school districts to ensure compliance with State Education Code; processes teacher certifications; provides educational and financial services for school districts. Salary set by the County Board of Education.

APPOINTED OFFICERS

In general law counties, certain offices are required by State legislation. Those that are mandated are the Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights and Measures, Air Pollution Control Officer, Health Agency Director, Probation Officer, Road Commissioner (County Engineer), and Social Services Director. All the others described below are optional. The Board of Supervisors appoints all except the Probation Officer, who is appointed by the Superior Court, and the Farm and Home Advisor, who is employed by the University of California.

Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer of Weights & Measures

Phone: 781-5910 Fax: 781-1035
2156 Sierra Way, Suite A, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.co.slo.ca.us

Agricultural Commissioner: conducts a comprehensive pesticide regulatory program and integrates pest prevention and management programs. Inspects agricultural products for quality; advises on land use planning.

Sealer of Weights and Measures: protects consumers and businesses by inspecting weighing and measuring devices and verifying business practices to ensure accuracy in the marketplace.

County Administrative Officer/Emergency Services Director

Phone: 781-5011 Fax: 781-5023
Room D-430, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

Assists the Board of Supervisors in managing, directing, and coordinating the operation of all departments over which the Board exercises control. Responsibilities include: Board agenda preparation and review; analysis, interpretation and implementation of Board policies; coordinates with Human Resources in labor relations; oversight of projects of countywide significance; and County budget management. Coordinates emergency and disaster preparedness planning, response, and recovery between local, state, and federal agencies; coordinates emergency preparedness of the public and organizations involved in emergency response.

County Counsel

Phone: 781-5400 Fax: 781-4221
Room D-320, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
www.co.slo.ca.us

Provides representation and legal advice to all County officers, departments, boards and commissions, and regional agencies. Provides litigation services in complex lawsuits including tax, personnel, and contract and land use matters, to minimize liability and maximize County recovery. Conducts legal research; drafts, reviews, and approves agreements, contracts, and projects; and advises County officers regarding their legal responsibilities under Federal and State law.

General Services Agency Director

Phone: 781-5200 Fax: 781-1074
1087 Santa Rosa St., San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.co.slo.ca.us

Provides centralized duplicating, printing, information technology, motor pool, garage, purchasing, architectural services, internal mail delivery, and property management for all County departments. Administers the County Capital Improvements Program. Oversees building and custodial maintenance of all County facilities. Manages County airports and parks system, including recreational operations at Lopez Lake, Santa Margarita Lake, and County golf courses.

Library Director

Phone: 781-5785 Fax: 781-9105
995 Palm Street, (City-County Library) San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.co.slo.ca.us

Administers the City-County Library System, which provides books, magazines and newspapers, local history documents, reference works, Spanish language materials, DVDs, music CDs, books-on-CD, and downloadable audio and e-books for fifteen branch libraries. Services include free internet stations, Wi-Fi and electronic databases, access to foreign language instruction, job and career assistance, test preparation, research and homework assistance, genealogy, news, health and wellness, and auto repair manuals. Evaluates the need for library services throughout the County and makes recommendations to the Board of Supervisors for the establishment of facilities to meet those needs.

Human Resources/Personnel Director

Phone: 781-5959 Fax: 781-1044

Room D-250, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

www.co.slo.ca.us

Administers all personnel services in the County; including employee recruitment, testing, classification studies, employee relations, training, and provides staff support to the Civil Service Commission. Manages the Risk Management program, which provides for insurance and liability management, workers' compensation, safety, and employee benefits. Acts as the lead labor negotiator for the County.

Planning and Building Director

Phone: 781-5600 Fax: 781-1242

Room C-370, 1050 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408

www.co.slo.ca.us

Prepares long-range plans, site plans, specific plans for selected areas, general community plans, and countywide General Plan elements. Administers and enforces land use and building safety ordinances and supervises energy and environmental review programs. Serves as planning advisor to the Board of Supervisors and consults with the Board and the Planning Commission on planning, building, zoning, and transportation matters.

Chief Probation Officer

Phone: 781-5300 Fax: 781-1231

2176 Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.co.slo.ca.us

Administers the Probation Department, which is responsible for recommending to the court the disposition of civil, criminal, and juvenile cases in the County penal system and for supervising persons placed on probation. Supports victims' rights and directs the operation of Juvenile Hall and the Juvenile Services Center. Responsible for the collection of restitution for victims and fines and fees from defendants.

Health Agency Director

Phone: 781-5500 Fax: 781-5541

2191 Johnson Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.co.slo.ca.us

Improves and maintains community health by identifying health issues, preventing disease and injury, influencing policy development, and promoting healthy behaviors through leadership, collaborative partnerships, education, direct services, surveillance, case management, and payment for eligible indigent medical care. As **Public Guardian**, acts as conservator of those persons decreed incompetent by the court. Oversees Animal Services, which provides animal care and control services in all areas of the County.

Public Works & Transportation Director: Road Commissioner, County Surveyor, and Flood Control Engineer

Phone: 781-5252 Fax: 781-1229
Room A-207, 976 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
www.co.slo.ca.us

Plans and directs engineering and survey services for land development projects. Maintains safe and efficient movement of traffic, oversees maintenance and operations on the County maintained network of roads, and reviews development proposals for survey techniques and documentation. Maintains and performs long-range planning functions for public utility systems for water and wastewater and constructs water storage facilities.

Social Services Director

Phone: 781-1600 Fax: 781-1701
3433 S. Higuera Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.co.slo.ca.us

Administers public assistance and social service programs financed by County, State, and Federal funds that are available to eligible County residents. These include Medical and County Medical Services Programs, CalWORKS, Foster Care, Adoptions, Food Stamps, Adult Protective Services, In Home Supportive Services, Work Forces Investment Act, and General Relief.

University of California Cooperative Extension: Farm and Home Advisor

Phone: 781-5940 Fax: 781-4316
2156 Sierra Way, Suite C, San Luis Obispo CA 93401
cesanluisobispo@ucdavis.edu

Volunteer advisors work with extension specialists and UC Davis faculty to develop and disseminate information. Cooperative Extension is supported by Federal, State, County, and private resources. The San Luis Obispo Office provides programming in agriculture, natural resources, nutrition, and consumer science, as well as youth development through 4-H programs. The County budget provides for local administrative resources such as office facilities, clerical support, transportation, and office supplies.

Veterans Service Officer

Phone: 781-5766 Fax: 781- 5769
Veterans Hall, 801 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.co.slo.ca.us

Assists veterans, their dependents, and survivors in obtaining their monetary and medical entitlements, including information and referral. Funded by a combination of County and State monies.

BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

The California State Government Code authorizes the Board of Supervisors to appoint as many boards, committees, and commissions as it considers necessary to provide adequate services. They may be set up and dissolved according to need. Some are mandated by State law. Members are compensated for only some expenses. For more information contact the County Clerk-Recorder at 781-5080.

Airport Land Use Commission - 7 members

Clarifies and ensures inter-jurisdictional cooperation with regard to common resources, land, and patronage in and around the County airport in San Luis Obispo.

Agricultural Liaison Advisory Committee – 15 members

Assists the agricultural industry to receive, review, and propose for presentation to appropriate county agencies, complaints from members of rural communities.

Agricultural Preserve Review Committee – 14 members

Develops policies and assists in the implementation of the agricultural preserve program.

Assessment Appeals Board - 3 members

Hears property tax assessment appeals from individual taxpayers. Appeals must be filed between July 2 and September 15.

Bicycle Advisory Committee – 10 members

Promotes bike transportation; helps develop County Bike Plan; reviews policies and programs in Circulation Element and Bikeways Element of the Regional Transportation Plan.

Civil Service Commission - 5 members

Prescribes, amends, repeals, and enforces rules for classified County employees. Investigates the enforcement of rules and efficiency of service. Hears discipline and termination appeals of employees. Staffed by the Personnel Department. For more information call 781-5959.

Commission on Children and Families - 9 members

Implements provisions of Proposition 10 to create and adopt a plan for early childhood development consistent with and in furtherance of the purposes of the California Children & Families First Act of 1998.

Children's Service Network Council – 15 members

Provides leadership to all agencies and programs dealing with families and the development of comprehensive community services for children and their families.

Commission on Status of Women - 15 members

Studies and recommends solutions to problems involving women in the County. Works to eliminate discrimination in the areas of housing, jobs, community services, employment benefits, education, and related fields.

County Commission on Aging - 17 members

Advises the Board of Supervisors in areas of concern to seniors, to assure the good quality, sufficiency, and coordination of services available to them. It seeks to enhance communication and cooperation among the Board of Supervisors, seniors, service providers, and funding agencies.

Drug and Alcohol Advisory Board – 10 members

Evaluates community drug and alcohol use; reviews County programs and budgets; advises the Board of Supervisors on programs and unmet needs; promotes an alcohol abuse-free and drug-free society.

Fish and Game Fines Committee - 10 members

Recommends to the Board of Supervisors the expenditure of fine monies received and spent locally. These funds are used for educational projects and equipment, and for research to improve or preserve natural habitats.

Health Commission - 11 members

Enables citizens and health care providers to participate in public health care decisions. Advises the Board of Supervisors on all major health care policies and health care legislation. Promotes strategic health planning and development of resources within the county.

Library Advisory Board – 7 members

Develops plans of service; evaluates services and advises on needed services.

Mental Health Advisory Board - 16 members

Reviews mental health needs, facilities, services, and special problems; surveys and reports community needs to the local Public Health Director; reviews annual update of mental health plan.

Parks and Recreation Commission - 5 members

Assists the Department of General Services and advises the Board of Supervisors on policy, planning, and development of the county parks system; reviews and recommends user fees and charges.

Planning Commission - 5 members

Hears all development proposals, including subdivisions not adjudicated at the administrative level (Planning Department). Hears appeals for proposals denied at the administrative level and for proposals to change the Land Use Element and/or Land Use Ordinance and recommends final action to the Board of Supervisors; reviews and acts on all Environmental Impact Reports. Decisions may be appealed to the Board of Supervisors.

Transportation Advisory Committee – 16 members

Provides public input to the SLO Council of Governments on transportation issues and the Regional Transportation Plan.

Water Resources Advisory Committee -- 32 members

Advises the Board of Supervisors on all policy decisions relating to water resources; determines the needs, desires, and financial capabilities of water districts and makes recommendations to the Board; recommends specific water resource programs and methods of financing them.

Workforce Investment Board – 48 members

Serves as private sector contact point for youth and adult employment and training programs. Specified in the Workforce Investment Act, operates a local career center through the Private Industry Council.

Planning

General Plan: State law requires that all counties and cities have a General Plan that addresses specific elements and is implemented with respect to local conditions and circumstances. The General Plan is a statement of development policies. It includes maps, diagrams, and text setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals regarding the following State-mandated

elements. Each element is to be internally consistent with the others:

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| 1. Land Use (LUE) | 4. Conservation | 7. Safety |
| 2. Circulation | 5. Open Space | |
| 3. Housing | 6. Noise | |

Counties and cities may elect to add other optional General Plan Elements that recognize local conditions considered important to long-range planning goals. San Luis Obispo County has adopted Recreation, Historic, Esthetic, Offshore Energy, and Economic elements in addition to the required elements. Because San Luis Obispo is a coastal county, it has a two-part Land Use Element: one part covering inland areas and the other the coastal areas.

Land Use Element: The LUE is the most important element of the General Plan. It designates the general distribution and intensity of uses of land for housing, commercial, industry, open space, education, public facilities, and other categories of public and private uses. Land is divided into “land use zones” which dictate how land may be used. Zones may include agriculture, open space, residential, commercial, or industrial, and may have several gradations, such as residential single family, residential multi-family, and low, medium, or high density. Where there is a dangerous or unusual condition, such as a flood plain, scenic highway, or airport hazard, the County (or city) will require additional consideration for development.

Coastal Zone Land Use Element: The coastal areas of San Luis Obispo County are subject to further standards established by the California Coastal Protection Act. Each coastal county must have a **Local Coastal Plan (LCP)**. Development in the Coastal Zone must deal with issues such as public shoreline access, visitor-serving facilities, coastal dependent industry, and low and moderate income housing needs. The LCP gives highest priority to preserving and protecting natural resources, including environmentally sensitive habitats and prime agricultural lands.

The **Land Use Ordinance (LUO)** is the principal way of implementing the General Plan. It sets specific requirements for land use design and development. San Luis Obispo County has both a Land Use Ordinance and a Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, corresponding to the inland and coastal Land Use Elements. The LUO sets standards, such as minimum parcel size, width and depth dimensions, and building setbacks or heights. It is the legal authorization for implementing and enforcing policies of the LUE.

Changes and appeals to the inland LUE and LUO are settled by the County Board of Supervisors, but proposals to change the Local Coastal Plan must first be approved by the State Coastal Commission.

For more information on the General Plan, planning elements and areas, and permit procedures for developing land, see the Planning and Building Department web site at www.sloplanning.org.

Finances

The cost of providing governmental services is met by the following funding sources:

State and Federal Aid. The largest percentage of revenue to the County (42%) comes from the State and Federal Governments. This revenue is mainly in the form of flow-through funds that pay for mandated programs. These funds include highway user taxes, health and welfare funding, and

public safety funding.

Taxes. The second largest source of revenue (32%) is taxes, with property tax (22%) the largest single tax category. The property tax is limited to 1% of assessed value, plus amounts for voter approved debt. The County Assessor is responsible for appraising all taxable property in the County except for public utilities, which are valued by the State Board of Equalization. Other significant tax receipts come from sales taxes, property transfer taxes, and transient occupancy taxes.

Other Revenues. The rest of the County's financial support comes from fees and charges for services (7%), licenses and permits (2%), and other sources such as fines, interest, and rents (17%).

Budget Schedule – Fiscal Year Beginning July 1

<u>Start</u>	<u>Budget Process Description</u>
Mid-May	Proposed budget available to the public.
Mid-June	Board of Supervisors holds hearings on the proposed budget.
Before July 1	Supervisors adopt budget.
September 30	Supervisors fix tax rates.

The County employed 2,403.50 people in FY 2010-11 with a budget of \$450.40 million. For more information and the current year's fiscal budget, go to the County's website at www.co.slo.ca.us.

Regional Agencies

San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG)

Phone: 781-4219 Fax: 781-5703

1150 Osos Street, Suite 202, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.slocog.org

Board Members: Twelve. All five Supervisors and the mayor or one council member from each of the seven cities.

Duties: Serves as the region-wide planning and programming agency for issues of regional concern. Is also the state-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), the state-designated Regional Transportation Planning Agency (RTPA), the Service Authority for Freeways and Expressways (SAFE), and the Census Data Affiliate (CDA) for the San Luis Obispo region. SLOCOG coordinates area agencies in multi-jurisdictional matters and administers federal and state funds designated for transportation, congestion management, and other areas of Board responsibility.

San Luis Obispo Regional Transit Authority (SLORTA)

Phone: 781-4472 Fax: 781-1291

1150 Osos Street, Suite 206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.slorta.org

Board Members: Twelve. All five Supervisors and the mayor or one council member from each of the seven cities.

Duties: Provides fixed schedule service (RTA) and ADA paratransit service (Runabout) throughout San Luis Obispo County, plus round trips to Santa Maria. Also administers the transit system for the Five Cities area (RTA-SCAT) and all SLO County transit services including Nipomo Dial-a-Ride, South Bay Dial-a-Ride, Cambria Trolley, and Shandon Senior Van. SLORTA supervises regional ridesharing outreach activities regarding alternative modes of transportation.

Funded by State and Federal grants, other public agency contributions, and state and federal gas tax monies.

Transit Service Information: See “Public Transit” on page 26.

Integrated Waste Management Authority (IWMA)

Phone: 782-8530 Fax: 782-8529

870 Osos Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

www.iwma.com

Recycling & household hazardous waste drop-off information: 800-400-0811 (no charge to caller).

Board Members: Thirteen. All five Supervisors and the mayor or one council member from

each of the seven cities and one representative from all authorized special districts in the County.

Duties: Combines the powers of the member agencies to achieve the State-mandated waste diversion goals, satisfy the requirements of the Integrated Waste Management Act, and develop waste management facilities for the benefit of the County and all its cities and special districts.

Air Pollution Control District (APCD Board)

Phone: 781-5912 Fax: 781-1002
3433 Roberto Court, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.slocleanair.org

Board Members: Twelve. All five county Supervisors and the mayor or one council member from each of the seven incorporated cities.

Duties: One of 35 air districts in the state, involves all members of the community to preserve air quality at the local level. Updates the Clean Air Plan; proposes emission control strategies; reviews new development plans for air quality impacts and issues permits; administers grant programs for emission reduction projects; monitors air quality at stations throughout the County; ensures compliance with all health-based federal, state, and local regulations.

Water Quality Control Board (WQCB) Central Coast Region No. 3

Phone: 549-3147 Fax: 543-0397
895 Aerovista Place, #101, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401-5427
www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralcoast

Region: WQCB is a State agency divided into nine regions, each with its own semi-autonomous board. Region 3 includes all basins, including Carrizo Plain, that drain into the Pacific Ocean from south Santa Clara County along the coast south to northern Ventura County.

Board Members: Nine. Appointed by the governor to serve four-year staggered terms. Must reside or maintain a place of business within the Region and have special knowledge of specific activities related to the control of water quality in the Region.

Duties: Regulates all waste discharges that could affect the waters of the state, including permit adoption, surveillance, monitoring, inspections, and enforcement orders; performs planning functions such as adoption and maintenance of a Water Quality Control Plan for the Region; partially regulates toxic and hazardous waste disposal, underground tank and other spill cleanups.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO)

Phone: 781-5795 Fax: 788-2072

1042 Pacific Street #A, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
www.slolafo.com

The State requires a Local Agency Formation Commission in each county. LAFCO is legally independent of local government jurisdictions.

Board Members: Seven. Two Supervisors, two council members from different cities, two representatives from different special districts, and a member from the public at large.

Duties: Discourages urban sprawl and encourages the orderly formation and development of local agencies based on local conditions and circumstances; determines the sphere of influence for each city and special district within the County; reviews and acts upon requests to form, dissolve, or reorganize any local governmental agency; coordinates logical and timely local governmental boundary changes; determines that services are provided efficiently and economically while agricultural and open-space lands are protected; initiates reorganization or consolidation of special districts when appropriate.

Special Districts

Most special districts are units of local government established by the residents of an unincorporated area in order to obtain services not provided by the County. Some special districts are authorized to perform a single function (fire protection, lighting) and others provide numerous services (similar to those of a city), such as a Community Services District (CSD). Some districts are financed by user fees, set to cover the costs of service, while general revenues, primarily property taxes, support other districts.

A **dependent** district is governed by the Board of Supervisors. An **independent** district is governed by a board of directors who are elected from within the district boundaries, such as a CSD. There are 14 Community Service Districts in San Luis Obispo County: Avila Beach, California Valley, Cambria, Creston Hills Ranch, Heritage Ranch, Independence Ranch, Linne Road, Los Osos, Nipomo, Oceano, San Miguel, San Simeon, Squire Canyon, and Templeton.

Two other special districts, the largest in the County, are:

Flood Control & Water Conservation District – Dependent

Phone: 781-5252 Fax: 781-1229

Mandated by State legislation. As flood control needs are recognized, zones are established to develop and fund mitigation projects such as stream-bed clearing and levee maintenance. This district also coordinates the State water pipeline project through the County and delivers water to local water distributors who have contracted for state water.

Port San Luis Harbor District – Independent

Phone: 595-5400 Fax: 595-5404

www.portsanluis.com

Established by the voters in 1954, the district boundaries extend from the Cuesta Grade to the Santa Maria River and encompass most of the City of San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach, and the southern part of the County. Governed by five elected commissioners, the Harbor District maintains all facilities and services needed by commercial and recreational users of Port San Luis Harbor as well as recreational facilities in Avila Beach, subject to the Local Coastal Plan.

Education

Public School Districts

There are eleven school districts in the County: Atascadero Unified, Cayucos Elementary, Coast Unified, Lucia Mar Unified, Paso Robles Unified, Pleasant Valley Joint Union Elementary, San Luis Coastal Unified, San Miguel Joint Union Elementary, Santa Lucia Regional Occupation Program, Shandon Joint Unified, and Templeton Unified.

Higher Education

Cuesta College, the County's only community college, offers an associate of arts program. Continuing education is offered in a variety of subjects for all residents over 18 years of age. The main campus is located approximately halfway between the cities of San Luis Obispo and Morro Bay on Highway 1. Cuesta College operates a South County campus at Nipomo High School and a North County campus in Paso Robles. The College is administered by a board of five trustees elected at large for staggered four-year terms.

A campus of the State University system, California Polytechnic State University San Luis Obispo is located adjacent to the City of San Luis Obispo. With an enrollment of more than 18,000 students, Cal Poly offers bachelor's and master's degree programs and teacher certification in agriculture, architecture, business, education, engineering, and several other fields. Continuing education includes classes for residents over 50 years of age at the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

Public Services

Animal Regulation

Animal control services are provided countywide from the Animal Regulation Center on Highway 1. Revenues received come from licensing fees and from service contracts with incorporated cities. Quarantine for suspected rabies cases is provided, as well as impoundment of stray animals. Phone: 781-4400.

Law Enforcement

The Sheriff-Coroner directs law enforcement operations in the unincorporated areas of the County from the County Operations Center, Kansas Avenue and Highway 1 near Camp San Luis. The County Jail and Juvenile Hall are also located there.

Public Health

The Public Health Department includes children's services, health clinics, environmental health and sanitation, family planning clinics, in-home support, hospice, AIDS programs, and mental health care. Phone: 781-5500.

Public Libraries

There are fifteen public libraries in the San Luis Obispo City-County Library System: Arroyo Grande, Atascadero, Cambria, Cayucos, Creston, Los Osos, Morro Bay, Nipomo, Oceano, San Luis Obispo, San Miguel, Santa Margarita, Shandon, Shell Beach, and Simmler. The City-County System also operates a Bookmobile that provides library service to rural parts of the County and some residential centers. Paso Robles has a city-operated public library. Grover Beach has a volunteer-run Community Library. County residents may also use the County Law Library in the County Government Center and the Cuesta College Library.

Public Transit

Fixed schedule service is provided throughout the County. From a hub at the County Government Center in the city of San Luis Obispo, the **Regional Transit Authority (RTA)** has routes to Hearst Castle, San Miguel, and Santa Maria, with stops and transfer points along Highway 1 and Highway 101. Connections may be made to local routes in Cambria, Morro Bay, Los Osos, Paso Robles, Atascadero, San Luis Obispo, Avila Beach, the Five Cities Area, Nipomo, and Santa Maria. Information about schedules and routes is available from the **SLO Regional Rideshare Office** (541-2277) or on their website www.rideshare.org. Persons who qualify for specialized transportation under the Americans with Disabilities Act may call 781-4363 for information and an application.

Additionally, a private, non-profit, community-based organization, **Ride-On Transportation**, provides door-to-door transportation services county-wide. Event shuttles, vanpools, medical shuttles, commute services, and individual-need trips are available. Phone: 541-8747. Website: www.ride-on.org.

Recreation

The County General Services Department operates three 18-hole golf courses: Morro Bay at Morro Bay State Park, Chalk Mountain in Atascadero, and Dairy Creek in El Chorro Regional Park on Highway 1, north of San Luis Obispo.

Three County parks provide camping facilities: El Chorro Regional Park, Oceano Campground south

of Pismo State Beach, and Lopez County Park on Lopez Lake. The Lopez facility includes nature programs, marina services, and monthly fish plantings. The Santa Margarita Recreational Area offers day-use picnic, boating, and fishing opportunities. For facilities reservations call 781-5930.

The County also supports the Historical Museum on Monterey and Broad Streets in San Luis Obispo.

The airport near San Luis Obispo is County owned and operated.

Day-use park facilities maintained by the County are:

- Biddle Park, Arroyo Grande;
- Cuesta Park, San Luis Obispo;
- Hardie Park, Cayucos;
- Nipomo Park, Nipomo;
- San Miguel Park, San Miguel;
- Shammel Park, Cambria;
- Shandon Community Park, Shandon;
- South Bay Park, Los Osos;
- Templeton Park, Templeton.

Social Services

The County Department of Social Services provides financial and social service programs for eligible persons and families, consistent with Federal, State, and County laws. The County administers these programs from offices in San Luis Obispo, Atascadero, Grover Beach, and Paso Robles. Further information may be obtained from the Department of Social Services, 3433 S. Higuera St., San Luis Obispo, 93401. Phone: 781-1600; website: www.slodss.org.

Voter Information

Number of registered voters in San Luis Obispo County as of September 2, 2010: 152,039.

County Clerk/Elections Office:

Room D-120, 1055 Monterey Street, San Luis Obispo. Phone: 781-5080.

5955 Capistrano Avenue, Atascadero. Phone: 461-6041.

www.sloclerkrecorder.org

To vote in California, you must be, on or before election day:

- A citizen of the United States;
- Eighteen years of age;
- Registered to vote 15 days before election day.
- Not in prison or on parole for a felony conviction.

Where to register: County Clerk/Elections Office.

Mail-in registration cards are also available at post offices, city halls, and many banks.

You should re-register if you:

- Change your name or address, or
- Change your party affiliation, or
- Are not currently registered in San Luis Obispo County.

If you have moved, where do you vote?

If you move **within** California after registration closes (15 days before the election), you may return to your old precinct to vote in person or you may apply for an absentee ballot to vote in your former precinct.

If you move **into** California fewer than 15 days before an election for President of the United States and were a qualified voter in another state, and would otherwise qualify as a California voter, you may vote for President and Vice-President. Contact the County Elections Office for assistance.

If you are registered in San Luis Obispo County and have moved **within** the County, you may vote in your new precinct by following certain procedures. Contact the County Elections Office for information.

Whenever you move, you should re-register in your new precinct as soon as possible.

To obtain an absentee ballot:

The back cover of your County of San Luis Obispo Sample Ballot (mailed to you before the election) has an absentee ballot application form with instructions.

If you are registered in another county in California, send a written request to the Clerk of that county. Include your address as registered, your signature, and the address to which you wish the ballot sent. Requests for absentee ballots to be sent by mail must be RECEIVED in the County Elections Office 7 days prior to the election.

Political Divisions in San Luis Obispo County:

U.S. House of Representatives	District 24
California State Senate	District 17
California State Assembly	District 35 & 37

Election Days:

California Primary Election: The first Tuesday after the first Monday in June of even-numbered years.

U.S. General Election: The first Tuesday after the first Monday of November of even-numbered years.

County, City, School District, and Special District elections coincide with either Primary or General Elections. Contact the County Elections Office for information.

